



# News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

January 24, 2014  
PH14-011

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**CDPH Lifts Mussel Quarantine and Health Advisories  
for Humboldt County, Tomales and Monterey Bays  
*Los Angeles County Advisory Remains in Effect***

SACRAMENTO - The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) is lifting the October 31, 2013 extension of the annual mussel quarantine for northern Humboldt County. CDPH is also lifting the December 13, 2013 health advisory warning consumers not to eat recreationally harvested bivalve shellfish (i.e., mussels, clams and scallops) from Tomales Bay and Monterey Bay. Recent testing shows levels of paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP) toxins have declined to safe or undetectable levels.

In Los Angeles County, the December 20, 2013, health advisory remains in effect for all sport-harvested bivalve shellfish taken between Cabrillo Point and the Orange County line. Dangerous levels of the PSP toxins continue to be detected in shellfish samples from this region. These naturally occurring PSP toxins can cause illness or death in humans. Cooking does not destroy the toxin.

PSP poisoning can create a tingling around the mouth and fingertips within a few minutes to a few hours after eating toxic shellfish. These symptoms are typically followed by loss of balance, lack of muscular coordination, slurred speech and difficulty swallowing. In severe poisonings, complete muscular paralysis and death from asphyxiation can occur.

This health advisory does not apply to commercially sold clams, mussels, scallops or oysters from approved sources. State law only permits state-certified commercial shellfish harvesters or dealers to sell these products. Shellfish sold by certified harvesters and dealers are subject to frequent mandatory testing.

"While there have been no reports of human poisoning from PSP in California during this season's unusual events, it's important for the public to be aware of current restrictions and advisories that may be in effect," said Dr. Ron Chapman, CDPH director and state health officer. People who plan to gather shellfish can get the most current information by calling the CDPH Biotoxin Information Line at 1-800-553-4133.

(more)

CDPH's ability to protect the public from dangerous PSP toxins is due in large part to the numerous organizations and volunteers that collect shellfish samples for testing. Those who are interested in taking part in this important monitoring program should email [RedTide@cdph.ca.gov](mailto:RedTide@cdph.ca.gov) or call 1-800-553-4133. CDPH can provide the necessary training and equipment for collecting and shipping samples.

[www.cdph.ca.gov](http://www.cdph.ca.gov)

